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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

22 April 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : [REDACTED]
Acting National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

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SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE
(Meeting held on 21 April 1981)

Poland

1. There was agreement that we could expect a relatively calm period in Poland for at least several weeks to a month. Both Solidarity and the regime apparently view their negotiations, scheduled to begin May 6, as a mechanism for channeling and controlling conflict; and these negotiations are expected to be prolonged. The regime has reacted to Walesa's appeal for an unforced "gesture" by agreeing to register an independent farmers' union by May 10, and this move -- which defuses rural discontent -- should also please the Church which has supported such a step. We do not believe that food shortages are likely to trigger major public disorder within the time frame of this assessment.

2. The major problem in the next 30 days will be the situation within the communist party itself. Grass-roots pressure for democratic reform and removal of conservative leaders from bottom to top in the party is strong, and Kania has been attempting to accommodate these sentiments rather than choose the path of frontal resistance. We believe a Central Committee plenum is likely to be held this coming weekend at which personnel changes could be made and decisions announced on the key issue of procedures for electing delegates to the critical party congress promised to be held in July. It is not clear yet whether the party leadership will be able to contain pressures for radical change in the party that will intensify as the congress approaches.

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3. Militarily, the situation in and around Poland is quiet; since 3 April all indicators of possible intervention have subsided.

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An important

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conclusion that apparently was accepted by all representatives at the meeting was that if the Soviets might have been anticipating intervention at the end of March with a relatively small force (12 divisions or somewhat more) designed to reenforce imposition of martial law by the Poles themselves, this low-cost option was now no longer available. The Soviets have probably decided that drift toward reformism has made the Polish party incapable of forcibly restoring order, and that consequently an intervention henceforth would probably need to be massive -- on the order of 30-45 divisions.

4. Because of the countdown to the party congress, the Soviets now face their most difficult choices in Poland since the troubles began last summer. The Soviets may be better able to tolerate Solidarity than a really democratized communist party in Poland. From the Soviet standpoint the key issue is whether or not a gradualist strategy, aimed at containing the liberal trend within the Polish party and then eroding it over the years, is viable. Currently the momentum behind reform is accelerating, and if the conservative elements in the Polish Central Committee and Politburo are seen as highly likely to be routed at the forthcoming congress, the Soviet leadership will have to ask itself what sort of a base would remain for implementing a gradualist roll-back.

Soviet-Latin American Relations

5. We see no fundamental change in the Soviet strategy for Central America, in the sense of support of armed struggle. However, the setback suffered earlier this year by the guerrillas in El Salvador and the forceful posture adopted by the US Administration have led to a shift of emphasis in implementation of this strategy. The Soviets now see a prolonged guerrilla struggle as the likely scenario in El Salvador rather than a quick victory as in Nicaragua, and are going about supplying arms on a smaller scale, through Cuba. The volume of Soviet-supplied arms actually getting into El Salvador has probably declined.

Soviet Posture Toward the Reagan Administration

6. Our previous assessment was that the Soviets had only reached a tentative judgment of the Reagan Administration, and were lying low with the intention of not prejudicing their future possibilities in relations with the United States. Since late March there has been a noticeably harder inflection in Soviet statements -- even in Brezhnev's relatively restrained pronouncements. Leonid Zamyatin, one of Brezhnev's key foreign policy spokesmen, has recently argued that the "hard-liners" are now in control

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of US policymaking, and that they are bent on a course of confrontation with the USSR. Some Soviet analysts profess to see different points of view articulated by Secretary Weinberger (the "hard-line" position) and Secretary Haig (a more "moderate" position). Others reject this line of argument. There seems to be a tendency to see Weinberger as expressing the true sentiments of the Administration, with Haig taking positions required by tactical diplomatic imperatives (for example, placating Western Europe on the issue of TNF negotiations). In any event, the Soviets have long since decided that when a definitive US policy toward the USSR is articulated, it will not be to their taste.

More Soviet Troops to Afghanistan?

7. There was unanimous agreement that despite widespread rumors of an increase in Soviet troop strength in Afghanistan, there was no hard evidence of this; and some participants argued there was even fairly good evidence to the contrary.

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